

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-32, and 35-41 were pending in the application. By the office action of March 29, 2007 ("the Office Action"), claims 1, 2, 4, 10-18, 22-25, 27, 28 and 37-41 have been rejected. Claims 21 and 26 have been objected. By the foregoing amendments, Independent Claims 1, 22 and 37 have been amended. Claims 1, 2, 4-32, and 35-41 remain pending in the application. Claims 1, 2, 4, 10-18, 21-28 and 37-41 are presented for examination. Responsive remarks are directed the claims as amended.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103:

Claims 1-2, 4, 10-11, 13-18 and 22-25 and 37-41 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over GB Patent No. 2, 253, 998 to Lurie et al. (hereinafter "Lurie") in view of Japanese patent and JP 10-113275 to Omura (hereinafter " Omura"). Applicant respectfully disagrees with the reasons for this objection.

Omura is directed to a purse hanger including a rigid arm (" iron bar," element 3) having a proximal end coupled with a rigid interface member (the "support backing," 1) by means of a "pivot" 5 including a "bearing, ball shaft" 2, and a distal end coupled with a link 7. A flexible member (" connection tool " 6) includes a proximal end coupled with the link and a distal and coupled with a "ring loop 8" configured to attach to a purse strap. The rigid arm free of Omura is straight, exhibiting no curvature. A stopper 4 is formed on the proximal end of the rigid arm adjacent the pivot. The stopper is positioned to engage the rigid interface member during a pivot process, thereby limiting the pivot range of the iron bar to 90 degrees.

In operation, gravity will cause the rigid arm of Omura to pivot exactly to a vertical orientation. The rigid arm is positioned adjacent to the edge of a table or supporting other member. Because the rigid arm is straight, the tensile axis of force extending through the rigid arm from the link 7 to the pivot 5 can not pass through the support backing on the tabletop, and will necessarily be oriented adjacent the edge of the tabletop. The flexible member 6 will also orient itself along this axis is a result of gravity.

Lurie is also directed to a purse hanger. Figures 1, 2 and 6 of Lurie disclose a purse hanger including a "housing 12" resting on a table, and an "elongated shaft 13" extending from the housing outward parallel to the counter or table top, and then bending downward to form a "support arm 14" (Lurie, page 6). To prevent the purse from sliding off the tip, the "Support arm 14 is deflected upwardly into a hook 15 upon which handbag 11 is hung" (Lurie, page 6).

Independent Claim 1 recites, in part:

a rigid arm with a central extension disposed between a proximal end and a distal end, ***wherein*** the proximal end is coupled with the rigid interface member in a orientation substantially parallel to the planar interface area, and wherein ***the distal end extends downward from the central extension when the distal end is positioned vertically beneath the planar interface area;***

Neither Lurie nor Omura disclose or suggest ***"a rigid arm with . . . a proximal end coupled with the rigid interface member in an orientation substantially parallel to the planar interface area, and wherein the distal end extends downward from the central extension when the distal end is positioned vertically beneath the planar interface area."***

The rigid arm of Lurie bends at an upward angle, and Omura does not disclose or suggest an embodiment wherein the rigid arm locates beneath the planar interface area. Therefore, even if Omura and Lurie could somehow be combined in a manner suggested by the Examiner, their combination still would not disclose or suggest every element of claim 1, and therefore, would not establish a prima facie case for obviousness. For at least these reasons, independent Claim 1, and claims 2, 4, 10-11, 13-18 which depend therefrom, stand allowable over Omura, Lurie, and their combination.

Independent claim 22 recites, in part,

a rigid arm with a central extension extending from a proximal end to a distal end, the central extension being oriented, at least in part, in a direction different from the proximal end, and in a direction different from the distal end, the proximal end being coupled to said interface member, wherein the rigid arm is configured to position the distal end vertically beneath the rigid interface member when the rigid interface member is disposed on the horizontal surface, and ***wherein the distal end extends in a downward***

direction from the central extension when the distal end is positioned vertically beneath said planar interface area;

Neither Lurie nor Omura disclose or suggest "***a rigid arm with . . . wherein the distal end extends in a downward direction from the central extension when the distal end is positioned vertically beneath said planar interface area.***" Therefore, even if Omura and Lurie could somehow be combined in a manner suggested by the examiner, their combination still would not disclose or suggest every element of claim 22, and therefore, would not establish a prima facie case for obviousness. For at least these reasons, independent Claim 22, and claims 23-25 which depend therefrom, stand allowable over Omura, Lurie, and their combination.

Independent Claim 37 recites, in part,

a bent rigid arm with a proximal end and a distal end, wherein the proximal end is coupled to said interface member in an orientation substantially parallel to the planar interface area, the rigid arm being configured such that the distal end is disposed vertically beneath the planar interface area when the planar interface area is horizontal, and ***wherein the distal end comprises a securement member;***

Neither Lurie nor Omura disclose or suggest "***a bent rigid arm with a proximal end and a distal end***, wherein the proximal end is coupled to said interface member in an orientation substantially parallel to the planar interface area, the rigid arm being configured such that the distal end is disposed vertically beneath the planar interface area when the planar interface area is horizontal, and ***wherein the distal end includes a securement member.***" Therefore, even if Omura and Lurie could somehow be combined in a manner suggested by the examiner, their combination still would not disclose or suggest every element of claim 37, and therefore, would not establish a prima facie case for obviousness. For at least these reasons, independent Claim 37, and claims 38-41 which depend therefrom, stand allowable over Omura, Lurie, and their combination.

Claims 12 and 27-28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lurie in view of Omura further in view of United States patent publication number 2004/0195484 to Sheeran (hereinafter " Sheeran"). Sheeran is directed to

an accessory hanger for hanging handbags, umbrellas, etc. (Sheeran, Abstract). The hanger includes a support base 10 and an arm 20. The arm has a first end 21 coupled to the support base. The arm curves downward at a first "angular end 23" and upward at a "second angular end 24." By this design, *"the second end 22 of the arm 20 is angled in an upward position."* (Sheeran, paragraph 0039 and Fig. 1).

In contrast to the Sheeran disclosure, claim 12 depends from independent Claim 1, and therefore includes the limitation:

a rigid arm with a central extension disposed between a proximal end and a distal end, ***wherein*** the proximal end is coupled with the rigid interface member in a orientation substantially parallel to the planar interface area, and wherein ***the distal end extends downward from the central extension when the distal end is positioned vertically beneath the planar interface area;***

As discussed above in conjunction with Claim 1, neither Lurie nor Omura disclose or suggest this limitation, and applicant respectfully submits that Sheeran does not disclose or suggest this limitation either. Because the second end of the Sheeran arm is "angled in an upward position," whereas the above claim element recites a rigid arm with a distal end that extends downward from the central extension, Sheeran, in fact, teaches the very opposite of the above recited claim element. Therefore, even if Omura, Lurie and Sheeran could somehow be combined in a manner suggested by the Examiner, their combination still would not disclose or suggest the above limitation, and therefore, would not establish a prima facie case for obviousness. For at least these reasons, claim 12 is not obvious over Lurie in view of Omura, further in view of Sheeran.

Claims 27 and 28 depend from claim 22, and therefore include the limitation:

a rigid arm with a central extension extending from a proximal end to a distal end, the central extension being oriented, at least in part, in a direction different from the proximal end, and in a direction different from the distal end, the proximal end being coupled to said interface member, wherein the rigid arm is configured to position the distal end vertically beneath the rigid interface member when the rigid interface member is disposed on the horizontal surface, and ***wherein the distal end extends in a downward***

direction from the central extension when the distal end is positioned vertically beneath said planar interface area

As discussed above in conjunction with claim 12, the second end of the Sheeran arm is "angled in an upward position," whereas the above claim element recites a rigid arm with a distal end that extends downward from the central extension. Therefore, Sheeran does not teach or suggest the limitation of "a rigid arm with . . . a distal end [that] extends in a downward direction from the central extension." As also noted above, Lurie nor Omura do not disclose or suggest this limitation either. Therefore, even if Omura, Lurie and Sheeran could somehow be combined in a manner suggested by the Examiner, their combination still would not disclose or suggest the above limitation, and therefore, would not establish a prima facie case for obviousness. For at least these reasons, claims 27 and 28 are not obvious over Lurie in view of Omura, further in view of Sheeran.

Claim Objections

Claims 21 and 26 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected based claim, but have been deemed allowable if we written an independent form, including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In view of the foregoing comments, applicant respectfully declines to rewrite the referenced claims an independent form at this time.

Reinstatement of Withdrawn Claims

Withdrawn claims 5-9, 19-20, 21-32 and 35-36 variously depend from independent Claims 1 and independent Claim 22. Because independent claims 1 and 22 stand in condition for allowance, thereby providing a generic base claim for the respective withdrawn claims, applicant requests that the Examiner reinstate withdrawn claims 5-9, 19-20, 21-32 and 35-36.

Request for Examiner's Amendment

Applicant understands that the use of the term "slide means" within withdrawn claim 19 is improper since it does not recite a function. Upon allowance of claim 1 as a generic

base claim, applicant requests the Examiner to enter an Examiner's amendment, changing the term "slide means" to a "slide member." Applicant notes that withdrawn claims 8, 9, 12 and 30 recite the term "means." Applicant believes that these withdrawn claims are properly presented as reciting function, but, upon allowance of a generic base claim, if the Examiner feels these claims improperly recite the term "means," Applicant invites the Examiner to enter an Examiner's amendment, substituting the term "member" for "means" for any of claims 8, 9, 12 or 30.

Conclusion

Applicant submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. If a telephone interview would be helpful in any way, the examiner is invited to call the applicant at the phone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted

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